

## OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

THE Baron is able to congratulate Mr. JOHN LANE "of London and New York," on the production of the latest volume of that series *de luxe*, the *Anglo Saxon Review*. By way of frontispiece, we have an engraving, rather hard in outline, from the original life-like portrait by JOHN SARGENT, R.A. of Lady RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, editress of this "Quarterly Miscellany." There is also a charming reproduction of Sir JOSHUA's "Perdita," from his painting of Mrs. ROBINSON, in the collection of the Baroness MATHILDE DE ROTHSCHILD. No wonder the susceptible FLORIZEL was captivated, and still less wonder is it that, being too susceptible, our "Fat Friend" FLORIZEL soon found other metal more attractive than even his PERDITA, to whom he had vowed himself "unalterable through life." PERDITA had forgotten the warning as to "putting trust in Princes," as she had forgotten much other good advice. There is more to be read in this number than comes within the Baron's present limit of "a short sitting" to tackle, but he hopes to be able to pay a visit to "A Famous French Château," by V. HUSSEY-WALSH, and to ascertain from Mr. WILLIAM ARCHER "What Can be Done for the Drama." The Baron notices the craftiness of this title. Mr. ARCHER does not say what "ought to be done," as though he would give up the subject for ever should his advice not be taken; nor does he let it be inferred that what "can be done" he himself will undertake to do. The Baron hopes to find an early opportunity for returning to this volume.

Reading *The Dean of Darrendale* (HUTCHINSON), my Baronite longs for a stout blue pencil held in relentless right hand. It is probable there would be stricken out most of the passages over which the soul of the author lingers lovingly. That does not imply that the process of condensation would not be invigorating. WYNTON EVERSLEY is embarrassed with a multiplicity of aims. As he progresses with his work, he is not quite sure whether it shall be a leaflet on socialism, a religious tract, or merely a novel. The consequence is that the novel goes to the wall. This is a pity, since there are some living characters in it, notably the Dean, who is introduced to the reader coatless, with unfastened shirt-sleeves, a waistcoat open in front, much befouled as by frequent contact with tar and victuals, a long clay pipe gripped hard beneath a heavy moustache. He is, at the moment, leaning out of the window of "The Anchor," the village inn he bought and transformed into the Vicarage, preferring it to the more canonical abode. He keeps the sign swinging, one room with a sanded floor where wayfarers may drink wholesome drink, and smoke whole-



*Olga (who has overheard a conversation in the Drawing-room).* "AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU WEREN'T BORN A LADY, COOK?"

*Cook.* "WHY SHOULD I BE GLAD, MISS OLGA?"

*Olga.* "WELL, SEE WHAT A LOT OF TROUBLE YOU'D HAVE WITH THE SERVANTS!"

some smoke, the biggest bedroom being reserved for belated tramps. How Parson Salter, as his neighbours call him, how Jimmy, as he styles himself, cares for everybody, and carries the sunshine round with him, is worth reading. By-and-bye WYNTON EVERSLEY will learn not to overload his pages with characters who are simply names, and will spare the reader whole pages of the prattle of a child phonetically rendered. "Oh, if 'ou p'ease, I 'ant to do to Muffie," may be music to the ear of the young mother. But we are not all mothers, and after the tenth page that sort of thing begins to pall.

THE BARON DE B.-W.

## PRO BOERO PUBLICO.

MR. WRONGRIGHT SHRIEKER was the guest of the evening at a dinner given by "The Enemy-is-always-in-the-right" Society. Sir TEPID WATERSON was in the chair. The toast of "England's Enemy" was replied to by Mr. SHRIEKER, who began by saying that when the nation was "more sober and reasonable," it would change its present opinion about the war—stultifying itself, presumably to please Mr. WRONGRIGHT SHRIEKER. He wound up by the astounding statement that the Dutch gave a contribution of £20,000 to the British Navy! The Kettle, jewelled in every hole, is awarded to Mr. SHRIEKER.

### "CHERCHEZ LA FEMME!"

How an important character does not put in an appearance at the St. James's Theatre, and the consequence thereof.

OF Mr. ALEXANDER as *The Man of Forty*, that is, as this particular man of forty, Mr. Frederic Lee Fanshawe, M.P., nothing



Roger and Lewis Dunster.  
"Two single gentlemen rolled into one."  
H. B. Irving.

can be said except what is laudatory. Why he should have accepted this piece will ever remain a managerial mystery, unless the explanation be that it was written to order, and that the terms of the contract were strictly fulfilled. As far as "make-up" goes Mr. ALEXANDER artistically forty-fies himself every night for the part which he plays as a sprightly man of forty and millionaire to boot probably would. He is a piano-forty man in his amatory moods: and he is *fortissimo*, when casting light comedy to the winds he becomes terribly in earnest. Every part is well represented. Mr. H. B. IRVING as the Double Dunster, i.e., the good and the bad Dunster, is excellent. Mr. AUBREY SMITH, as *Algie Portman*, the victim of matrimony, is a capital sketch of character, and his reconciliation with his fast wife, well played by Miss GRANVILLE, is one of the best comedy scenes in the piece. Miss ESMÉ BERINGER's burlesque actress, *Claire De Spenser*, is purposely objectionable, but she cleverly contrives to enlist the sympathy of the audience for her before she disappears from the scene. Mr. BONNIN, as *Raymond Barker*, M.P., is capital in himself, but somehow, author and stage-manager between them have contrived to turn what ought to have been a comedy episode into mere burlesque.

Miss JULIE OPP as *Mrs. Egerton*, the bad Dunster's wife, has a thankless part with which she does the best that probably can be done in the circumstances. Mr. EADIE, as *Captain Dennis Garner*, is unobtrusively good as the lover of the eccentric

young lady, *Elsie Fanshawe* (charmingly played by Miss FAY DAVIS, the most unconventional of our *ingénues*), who is so certain that there are "visions about."

The third act is far and away the best, and its termination so satisfactory, in leaving uninteresting problems unsolved, that, not having sufficiently studied the programme, we were leaving the theatre, complimenting the author on the clever finish with which he had redeemed his somewhat commonplace use of familiar materials, when we were politely informed that another act was yet to come! Then, for the first time, it occurred to us that we had missed a great point, perhaps the point of the piece!! What was it? Why, *Roger Dunster*, i.e., the Good Young Dunster, who gets £400 a year as permanent secretary to *Lee Fanshawe*, M.P., had informed his employer that, on this sum, he was about to marry, that he was engaged, and that his marriage synchronised with that of his generous friend's. But though this fact had been, in the course of the three acts, frequently alluded to, and, indeed, had been emphasized on more than one occasion, the Good Young *Roger Dunster*, even in his most confidential moods when closeted with *Lee Fanshawe*, M.P., had never once mentioned the name of the lady to whom he was engaged! *Lee Fanshawe* had never even asked for it; and we, alas, had been as uninterested in the matter as Mr. *Lee Fanshawe* had shown himself.

Ah! Now, here was something that the author, the crafty Mr. WALTER FRITH, had kept up his sleeve. He might use up old materials; he got 'em cheap, and they served his purpose: but the novelty in the design—there was the point! A lady kept in the background, and to be brought out as a startling revelation in the fourth act! So we returned to our seat expecting great things. Alas! "*Cherchez la femme!*" She never came: the expected didn't happen. The Good Young *Dunster's* future bride did not turn out to be Miss

*Claire De Spenser* (we never thought she would), and there was only one girl left in the cast for him to marry, and that was *Miss Vachell*, a lady-journalist, played by Mrs. MAESMORE MORRIS, whom he had met (as it suddenly recurred to us) in the first act, and with whom he had had a long and not uninteresting scene;



Miss Elsie—"the Ingénue"—  
Fay Davis.

"Oh, papa, what a funny man you are!"

after which they had parted on such terms as really were quite enough to suggest a "union of hearts" at some later period of the evening. No; Mr. FRITH has provided the Good Young Man of the name of *Roger Dunster* with an invisible wife; and with her non-appearance, all interest in the virtuous *Dunster* collapsed, and that good young party himself soon disappeared from our gaze, probably to meet the mysterious lady. Not even the excellent acting at the St. James's can make the fourth act anything but *de trop*. In the third act is the one great chance of success for the piece.

### WAR HAPPILY AVERTED.

FRESH INSULT TO ENGLAND.

GREAT EXCITEMENT.

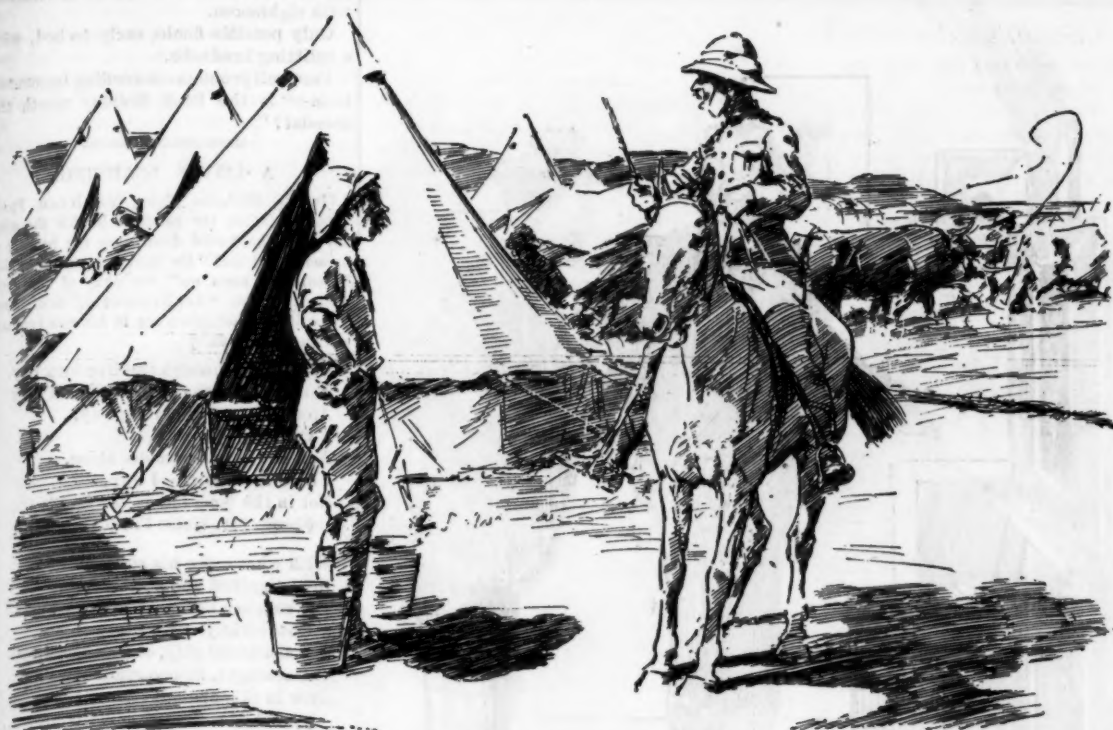
PUNCH EXPELLED FROM PARIS.

THE above was the heading of a contents-bill, which the Fighting Editor was preparing on the reception of a despatch from our Paris correspondent, stating that "*Punch* had been ordered out of Paris." Later intelligence, however, revealed the fact that the *Punch* referred to was not the Sage of Fleet Street, but our old friend M. GUIGNOL, who has, after many long years of joyous sojourn in the Elysian Fields, been summarily banished to the Sahara of the suburbs. We condole with M. GUIGNOL, we sympathise with the Parisians, and we invite the exile, if the authorities will permit, to take up his quarters on the Thames Embankment. He is far more entertaining than the County Council Band, and quite as virtuous.



"TRENTÉ ET QUARANTE."

Mrs. Egerton Opp and Geo. Fanshawe, M.P.  
Alexander.



### AMONG THE IRREGULARS.

*Regular Officer.* "WHY DON'T YOU SALUTE ME, SIR! YOU MUST SEE I AM AN OFFICER!"  
*Imperial Yeoman.* "AYE, YE MAY BE. BUT YE DUNNA BELONG TO OUR GANG, YE SEE!"

#### FOOT-NOTES TO HISTORY.

Being extracts from the work of Dr. Boreham, published 3000 A.D., and designed to elucidate certain obscure passages in Prof. Dryasdust's "A Cent Britain."

**Majuba Hill.**—At one time, apparently, a place of some importance. In a fragmentary print, dated 1900 A.D., I find the words, "To-day, Majuba Hill has been wiped off the slate," from which I infer that the place disappeared suddenly, owing to some catastrophe. Its former site has not yet been fixed by antiquarians.

**Select Committee of Enquiry.**—In the 19th century, it was the privilege of rich prisoners of State to select their own judges. The punishment appears to have been graduated according to their wealth, millionaires escaping scot-free, while others served longer or shorter periods in inverse ratio to their bank accounts.

**Leader of the Opposition.**—An obscure office which fell into disrepute at the end of the 19th Century. The function of the leader was to follow his party, and when this proved impossible, to take to bed.

**Equal Rights for all White Men.**—The cause for which both sides fought in the war of 1900. By the phrase the Britons implied annexation of the two republics; the Boers, Dutch suzerainty in South Africa.

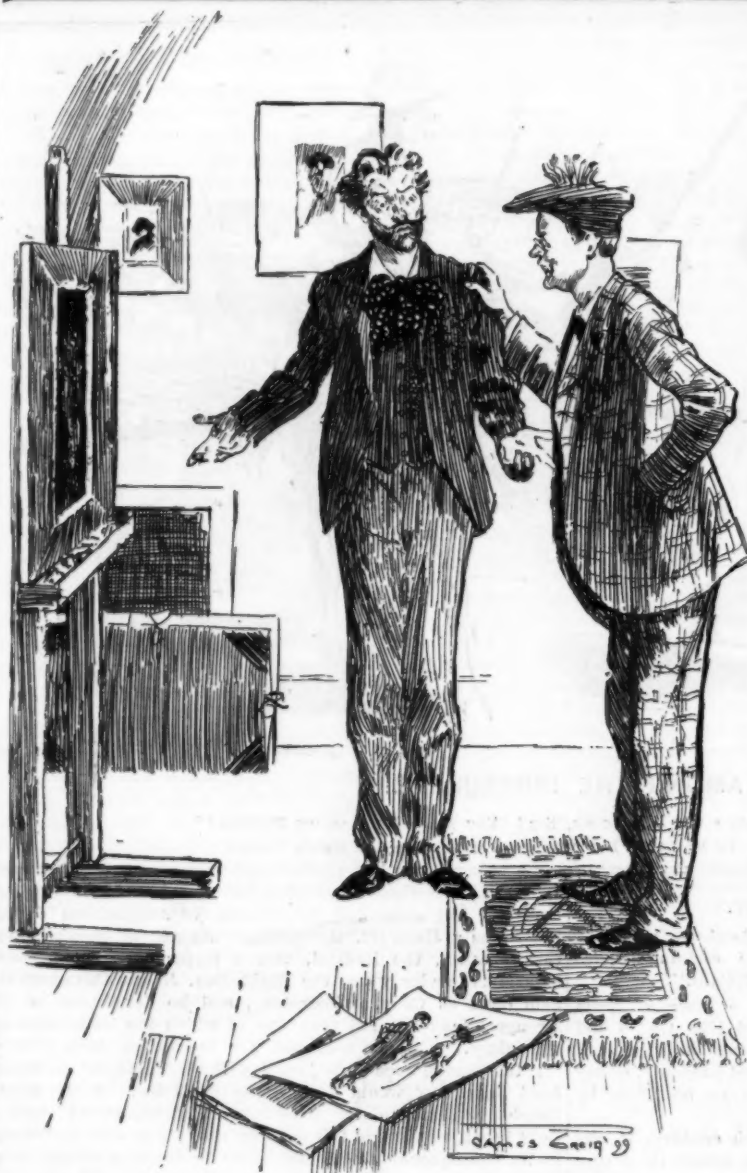
**Joseph Chamberlain.**—Recent research has proved, beyond question, that there were two persons of this name. One was a Radical of the most advanced type; the other was a Tory minister. One was a Little Englander (cf. the fragment *Against Lord Salisbury*, circa 1880.—"I am prouder of having

warred against disease and crime and ignorance in Birmingham than if I had instigated the invasion of Afghanistan"); the other was a Jingo (cf. the *Highbury Speech*, et passim). JOE CHAMBERLAIN, the Radical, was a bitter opponent of Lord SALISBURY, under whom the Right Hon. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN held office as Colonial Secretary, and he denounced in the strongest language the very war of which the latter took all the glory. (Cf. the fragment *For the Boers*, circa 1883:—"If the Orange Free State joined with the Transvaal, no doubt, Lord SALISBURY would declare war on it too. If the whole Dutch population of the Cape rose, Lord SALISBURY, with a light heart, would lead this country into a war more disastrous in its consequences, more certain to be fruitless of any good results than any war in which we have been engaged since we tried to compel the allegiance of the American colonies.") In short, whatever JOE CHAMBERLAIN was, the Right Hon. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN was not; and to imagine them to be the same person is to conceive a far greater anomaly than the proverbially strange case of *Dr. Jekyll* and *Mr. Hyde*.

**Mr. Punch.** From the frequency with which Prof. DRYASDUST quotes this writer, it is evident that he regards him as our most reliable authority for this period. He is the only author whose works have come down to us in their entirety, doubtless on the sound principle of the survival of the fittest.

ADVERTISEMENT BY THE L.C.C.—Great opportunity for a "Society Clown"!! Employment for him during the day in various parts of London, where he can produce all his newest and oldest songs, jokes and witticisms, with a view to "diverting the traffic."





### QUOI ?

*First Artist (six months in Paris). "YES, THIS IS THE BEST THING I'VE DONE."*  
*Second Artist (just arrived). "MON, DINNA LET THAT DISCOORAGE YE!"*

#### BANK HOLIDAY GRUMBLES—IN ADVANCE.

(By Our Prophetic Pessimist.)

It is certain to rain all day long.  
 Everything in the shape of an excursion  
 sure to be overcrowded.

If early rising is needed, as a matter of  
 course no one will be called in time.

Breakfast not ready, and boots neglected  
 to be cleaned.

Not a cab to be seen, and all the omni-  
 buses full inside and out.

Destination—if ever reached—will be  
 distinctly disappointing.

Spot visited will have shops closed  
 and "places of interest" inaccessible.

Good hotels expensive and indifferent  
 hostelries messy.

Promised enjoyment a failure if the day  
 spent away from London.

In town, city and West End like the  
 place on a Sunday, with churches closed  
 and public-houses open.

Free exhibitions rather duller than

usual, and halls and theatres blocked  
 with sightseers.

Only possible finale, early to bed, with  
 a splitting headache.

Farewell problem—according to common  
 form—"is the Bank Holiday worth the  
 scandal?"

#### A LITTLE LEARNING.

[In the *Methodist Times*, Mr. HUGH PRICE  
 HUGHES depicts the emotions he felt the other  
 day when he looked down upon the harbour of  
 Syracuse and read "the immortal words in which  
 HERODOTUS sums up" the story of the great  
 Athenian defeat. "Let HERODOTUS," he exclaims,  
 "describe the terrible scene in his own pregnant  
 and burning words."]

BELOW me, through the live-long day,  
 The dancing wavelets plash and play  
 Along the margin of thy bay,  
 O sunny Syracuse,  
 And as I stand, remote, alone,  
 I take HERODOTUS—I own,  
 Not in the flesh but in the BORN  
 (Quoth Mr. HUGH PRICE HUGHES).

With what a fire his story glows!  
 How dignified and stately flows  
 The cadence of his Attic prose!

How vividly one views  
 The shattered ship, the ribboned sail,  
 The sea-fight, as one reads the tale  
 Here in this ancient classic Dale!  
 (Quoth Mr. HUGH PRICE HUGHES).

But what a thing is man! How blind  
 And ignorant his little mind!

Not one Sicilian I find

To whom it is not news  
 That this sad tale was told by thee,  
 HERODOTUS! Apparently

Thy work is known to none but me  
 (Quoth Mr. HUGH PRICE HUGHES).

#### ON THE LATEST MISHAP.

*First Civil and Military Critic.* What!  
 Ten thousand Boers hiding in ambush and  
 not discovered by any scouts! Impossible!  
 My dear fellow, ten thousand Boers want  
 some hiding!

*Second C. and M. C.* They do! and let's  
 hope it won't be long before they get it;  
 and a jolly good "hiding" too.

#### THE VERY PLACE FOR HIM.

*Out-of-work Acting Manager (to Comedian,  
 "resting").* The fact is, I don't know  
 where to look for a shop.

*Comedian (ever true to the trade).* Why  
 not go to the front, old man? You'll be  
 in your right position there!

[*Acting Manager squirms, but doesn't see it.*]

**PAX AFRICANDA.**—A certain authoress  
 belongs to the "Stop-the-War" party, but  
 she cannot assuredly be called with any  
 justice Mrs. OLIVE-BRANCH SCHREINER.





*Sidney Sutherland. Apr 11 1900.*

*The Marquis of Salisbury (to himself). "I THINK THAT WILL STOP HIS MOUTH."*

[Lord LONDONDEERRY has been appointed Postmaster-General *vice* the Duke of NORFOLK resigned.]



"NURSE, CAN I HAVE BABY'S EYES WHEN IT BREAKS?"

#### REGENT STREET.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—I do not suppose that there is a more dangerous place for crossing the roadway in the whole of Europe than Piccadilly Circus, and the charming way in which carriages, cabs, omnibuses and vans are permitted to endeavour to exterminate the pedestrian gives me the greatest delight as I stand under the Shaftesbury Fountain, noting the general discomfiture.

But Piccadilly Circus is nothing to Regent Street itself, where from Oxford Circus downwards any would-be suicide can easily be accommodated. It is a quaint, and, from my point of view, laudable scheme on the part of the police to stop the traffic on one side and land the "gutter-skippers" on a "refuge." When once there the poor creatures have no means of completing their transit, for the constable on the O. P. (or Opposite Policeman) side has not the least desire to further their movements. Then the fun begins. The refugees, tired of being made prisoners, endeavour to escape. Most of them do, after several attempts, but it is delicious, again from my point of view, to observe the near shaves which most of them get, and now and again an accident, possibly fatal, occurs. Long life to the system, which means short death. Try it yourself, Sir, and oblige

Yours, with professional card,

"MR. MOULD."

References to MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT & Co. kindly permitted.

TO ANTAGONISTIC FORCES IN SOUTH AFRICA.  
—FRENCH leave and Dutch courage.

#### MANUEL DE LA CONVERSATION.

##### EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE.

To the Office of Tobacco.

Au Bureau de Tabac.

One card postal for the stranger and three stamps—post of twenty-five, if he you please, Mrs.

How, this halfpenny is english?

Ah, pardon! See there one franc.

It is italian? I come of him to receive of one boy of coffee.

I not have but two pieces of hundred halfpennys. And the one of shes is mexican, by blue! Are they all thieves the boys of coffee! Happily the other is good. Her see here.

Should have you by hazard of the english tobacco?

Ah no! Of the corporal only.

He there has yet something that he me must, one box of matches-candles. But of the

Une carte postale pour l'étranger et trois timbres—poste de vingt-cinq, s'il vous plaît, madame.

Comment, ce sou est anglais?

Ah, pardon! Voilà un franc.

C'est italien? Je viens de le recevoir d'un garçon de café.

Je n'ai que deux pièces de cent sous. Et l'une d'elles est mexicaine, parbleu! Sont-ils tous voleurs les garçons de café! Heureusement l'autre est bonne. La voilà.

Auriez-vous par hasard du tabac anglais?

Ah non! Du caporal seulement.

Il y a encore quelque chose qu'il me faut, une boîte d'allumettes-bougies. Mais des

matches that one can to match, allumettes qu'on peut allumer, well heard.

Ah, you not of them have but Ah, vous n'en avez que des of the french. françaises.

All to fact unuseful. Good Tout à fait inutiles. Bon day, Mrs. jour, madame. H. D. B.

#### DISCUSSION BEFORE "JOINING THE LADIES."

First Convivial Party. I rec'leekpietcherin Punsh where chap d'cided whether he wash shere'w'd or no if he could pronounsh wordsh "Bri'sh Conshtoosh'un."

His friend (quite half a bottle ahead of his companion). Yesh—but I know better teashthan that—if you can pronounsh plainly "I'm a Fish'ry-Commish"—no, I mean "Fish Commish"—no—(very distinctly)—"Fish-er-ree Com-mish'ner." (Triumphantly.) There!—then—(collapsing)—you're all ri'.

[But on second thoughts they don't "join the ladies."]

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.—Here is a Unionist suggestion, which, though it is more judicious to put in the form of a question, must not be considered as coming "in so questionable a shape" as not to command universal assent; viz., why not in future let Dublin be the capital instead of London, say for seven years at a spell, turn and turn about? Surely no one, whether English, Irish or Scotch, could possibly object to dublin' his capital, even if only for seven years, eh?

## A SONNET FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

(To "Long Tom.")

How do I pass thee? Let me count the ways.

I pass thee to whatever length or height  
Thy case may reach, so thou art out of sight—

Showing a neutral's most ideal grace.  
I pass thee through from Delagoa Bay's  
Convenient port, by day as well as night,  
I pass thee freely—almost, if not quite—  
I pass thee surely, and earn KRÜGER'S  
praise.

I pass thee as machinery meant for use  
In distant gold mines, with a child-like  
faith.

I pass thee as pianos, if they choose,  
Or other bulky things, without a breath  
Of least suspicion! Nor shall I refuse  
To pass thee with a wink until my death.

## MASTERPIECES MODERNISED.

VIII.—CRANFORD.

(Revised by M-d-me S-r-h Gr-and.)

THE serenity of Cranford had been pleasantly ruffled. A large poster outside the Assembly Rooms announced an important lecture upon "The Marriage Problem," by Mrs. IDEALA BETH. Tickets of admission were eagerly sought for, and Signor BRUNONI (the world-renowned conjurer), who had secured the rooms for the preceding night, had to be content with an audience consisting chiefly of a few children from the National school.

The eventful evening arrived, and the rooms were crowded. Even Miss BETSY BARKER left her favourite Alderney cow for this occasion (horrible looking thing a cow!), whilst Miss JENKYNs, Captain BROWN and his daughters—in fact, all the local lights put in an appearance. "All the 'beth' people are here," observed Captain BROWN (it was the first joke he had ever made in Cranford), for which weary witticism he was cut by his neighbours for the next few weeks. Then the lecture started. Mrs. IDEALA BETH was a wonderful woman: handsome, accomplished; a clear thinker, a finished speaker, in short, a kind of Girtton Venus with a dash of Hypatia thrown in. And then how telling, how true, and how penetrating her remarks! Marriage, she said, was often a failure. It might be tolerable, were it not for the men. (Captain BROWN began to wish he hadn't come.) Good-looking men were especially unreliable—(applause from some elderly spinsters)—more particularly when they had white teeth set too far apart—(Captain BROWN, who had lost most of his teeth, now felt easier)—or when their eyes were of a gray-green colour. At this point the rural postman suddenly beat a retreat, followed by indignant scowls from the ladies, who mentally

resolved to give up postcards as a means of correspondence. Altogether, the lecture was a great success. Some of the men spoke rudely about it; but then men, as a rule, are such dull-witted, ill-tempered brutes. As a result of the lecture, Miss JENKYNs inaugurated a series of physiological teas, at which delicate questions relating to sex were cheerfully discussed over muffins. Miss JESSIE BROWN had quite a tiff with the Rector because he would not publish her essay on "The Deterioration of Man" in the parish magazine. Birthday books with quotations from HUXLEY and CARPENTER became the fashion. Of course a few foolish, conventional people objected to all these changes, and at a debate, where it was carried by a large majority



## A GOOD IDEA TOO.

She. "ISN'T IT SAD TO THINK THIS IS OUR LAST DAY!"

He. "OH, I DON'T MIND SO MUCH. YOU SEE, I'M GOING TO TAKE MY GEES OVER TO SOUTH AFRICA. THE SEASON IS HARDLY OVER THERE, I BELIEVE."

resolved to give up postcards as a means of correspondence. Altogether, the lecture was a great success. Some of the men spoke rudely about it; but then men, as a rule, are such dull-witted, ill-tempered brutes. As a result of the lecture, Miss JENKYNs inaugurated a series of physiological teas, at which delicate questions relating to sex were cheerfully discussed over muffins. Miss JESSIE BROWN had quite a tiff with the Rector because he would not publish her essay on "The Deterioration of Man" in the parish magazine. Birthday books with quotations from HUXLEY and CARPENTER became the fashion. Of course a few foolish, conventional people objected to all these changes, and at a debate, where it was carried by a large majority

"that the novel be turned into a medical tract," Miss BETSY BARKER voted with the minority, but what else could be expected from a person who had a favourite cow! A. R.

## LONG LIFE TO THE PRINCE!

WELL might H.R.H. the Prince of WALES have said, quoting SHAKESPEARE,

"This attempt

I'm soldier to, and will abide it with  
A Prince's courage."

Mr. Punch, with all loyal British subjects, and for that matter with every one everywhere, most heartily congratulates H.R.H. on his providential escape from the pistol of the would-be assassin. Ad multos annos!





"COULD YOU EAT ONE OF THOSE CAKES, LITTLE BOY?"

"ONE O' THEM LITTLE JAM THINGS! WHY, I'D HEAT SIX ON 'EM!"

#### ARMA VIRUMQUE.

MR. PUNCH, SIR,—I venture to hope that you will allow me sufficient space in your influential columns to make known the inconvenience which attends the wearing of the khaki. I am proud to describe myself, and with truth, an Imperial Yeoman. Is it right, Sir, I ask, that my uniform should be a cause of mockery and insult to the man in the street? All went well with me, I was dined, treated, and worshipped in my native suburb, until the local authorities took it into their suburban heads to organise a torchlight procession for the benefit of my fellow heroes in South Africa. In the said procession were many cars, illustrative of the war, while on each car stood a group of khaki-clad heroes, who were really more or less peaceable civilians. Myself, I went in uniform to watch the procession from the street, and was continually jeered at by passers-by, and asked why I had left my car, how much money we had made, where the procession was going, and whether I was not adjectively glad that I was not a real Yeoman. Maddened and infuriated, I was at length compelled to rush home and change into mufti, since in that garb only were peace and civility to be found. I trust, Sir, that you will give publicity to the woes of, Yours, etc.,

Tr. 05, I. Y. 500.

#### RATHER ROUGH ON HIM.

*Garrulous Stranger* (in smoking-room of Riviera Hotel). Yes, Sir, I remember the Duke well; when I was up at Oxford we met nearly every day for a chat.

*Quiet Man* (in corner). May I ask at what college you were?

*Garrulous Stranger*. None, Sir. I was a non-collegiate member of the University.

*Quiet Man* (with a smile). Quite true, you were non-collegiate, for, now I come to think of it, you were a clerk at OLD-CRUST, the wine-merchant's.

[G.S. glances at Q.M. and then bolts.]

#### THE BOOK OF BEAUTY.

A GREAT THOUGHT FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

IN MONTHLY PARTS.

V.—THE SPRING SECTION.

(For April.)

APRIL 1ST.—"There is nothing," said Lady WOLVERMINSTER, "so tediously obvious as the unexpected. That is why it is so exhausting to be made an April fool."

"For myself," remarked ETHELWULFA, with her cynic smile, "it is in Spring that I always feel most autumnal."

"Or a March hare, for that matter," continued Lady WOLVERMINSTER.

*Ell-n Th-rn-cr-ft F-wl-r.*

2ND TO 5TH.—White-frothed as the wind-kissed foam when the Day and the Night to a psœan of passionate pomp lie each in the other one's lap,

At the call of the Mother of Months through the marrow of Spring uprises the symbol of Youth that is yeasty, the surge that is sap;

And the anguish of EROS is on me, the bitter-sweet bloom that is blasted and blown to a pulp with the Seasons that eat as a flame,

Dim-felt through the veil of a vista resembling the length of this line from its birth to its bier, from the dawn to the death of the same.

*A. C. Sw-nb-rne.*

6TH TO 8TH.—REBECCA GINS walked down the lane putting her feet forward alternately. There were hedges on both sides; one on the left, one on the right. The young leaves were a pale green. Overhead ran the telegraph-wires. The poles were about thirty-five yards apart. A robin sat on a spray of blackthorn, which moved under its weight, now down, now up. The reddish colour of its breast, and the grey-brown of its plumage, contrasted with the white of its perch. Rain had fallen and the ground was wet, especially in the ruts. The second-hand feather in REBECCA's hat drooped a little over her left ear; and the third button of her off boot was wanting. Smoke went up from the chimneys, taking the direction of the wind, West with a touch of South. Between the fleecy clouds the sky suggested a tone of blue. All these phenomena (including the feather,



*Irish Driver.* "YEE, YEE 'ONNER, IT'S A NASTY BIT O' ROAD, IT IS, AN' IT'S LIKELY YE ARE TO 'AVE A FALL OUT, IF YE AREN'T DRIVIN' CAREFUL!"

which was out of sight) escaped REBECCA's notice. She was not gifted with that grasp of essential detail, which is the sign of an artistic nature, nurtured in the best School of Realism.

*G-rge M-re.*

9TH TO 12TH.—As the blossoms of Spring is thy laughter, my Persian Delight,

When the Moon of Fecundity handleth the coursers of Night.

As the blush of the Peach of the Garden ere wapes begin,  
Even such is the Pink of Condition my Bloomer is in.

Heart-searcher! The cherries of Sa'di are pale to thy lips,  
And thy cheeks are a posy of pomegranates minus the pips.

At the voice of my DŪDŪ the mock of the turtle is dumb,  
And the humming-bird, swooning for sweetness, omitteth to hum.  
*Sir Edw-n Arn-ld.*

13TH TO 18TH.—It is a commonplace of your anthropologist that the symptoms of atavism are more marked in early Spring. In the case of young BAMBOROUGH, a strain of the old Jacobite stock of Northumberland which stood for the "King" at Preston always announced itself with a certain exigency about the close of Lent. It was apparent not so much in an attitude of direct opposition to the House of Hanover as in a general restlessness under authority, a penchant for rising to occasions. Had Oxford known him in the '15, when ORMOND failed to rouse Devon, he would probably have risked his head in the North with MAR and DERWENTWATER and the boy RADCLIFFE. As it was, he was merely gated by his Dean for cutting chapel.

As he sat in his tapestried chambers after College Mess, his oak was suddenly unported, and in burst the Hon. BOBBIE LACKLAND in a gold and purple dressing-gown. "Just had a

wire from Mortlake, old boy," he cried, slapping BAMBOROUGH on the chest. "No. 1 in the boat has wrung his withers, and they want you to stroke Oxford in the race to-morrow."

"When do they start?" asked BAMBOROUGH wearily.

"Eleven sharp, against the ebb," replied LACKLAND.

"As you please, then," said BAMBOROUGH, with a yawn. "I have a wine here to-night; but I can run up to town in the tandem about daybreak, instead of turning in. Suppose a tenner would see the porter? Have a cigar or two."

The reader will draw his own conclusions from the data here submitted. I, for one, shall not be hurt if he traces in the methods of these young gentlemen an inherent lack of probability.

*Andr-w L-ng, in collaboration with Ou-da.*  
(To be continued.) O. S.

#### CROSS-PURPOSES.

*Ethel (reading from paper).* Oh! Mamma, here are people wanting us to give up Hot Cross Buns.

*Mamma.* It's that KENSIT again, I suppose. He'll be wanting to do away with Union Jack next and alter the names of King's Cross, Charing Cross and New Cross. A regular Crossing Sweeper, that's what I call him.

[Is not reassured by explanation.]

SHAKESPEARIAN QUOTATION (for Butcher's boy leaving supply with kitchen-maid)—

"These my joints,  
Which if they have as I will leave 'em them."

—Henry the Fifth, Act IV., Sc. 3.



*Lecturer.* "GOOD EVENING, SIMPSON. GET ME OUT OF THESE THINGS QUICKLY, I'M WET THROUGH!"

*Attendant (pleasantly).* "NEVER MIND, SIR, YOU'LL BE DRY ENOUGH ON THE PLATFORM!"

#### SOMETHING LIKE AN OBJECT LESSON.

(An up-to-date School Board Chronicle.)

THE Elderly Class, under the supervision of the Government Instructor, assembled in the wood outside the little village of Mudcomb on the Slooze. The body was composed of Old Boys and Elderly Spinsters. There were half a dozen of each sex, and the aggregate age total reached six hundred.

"Now, my dear pupils," said the G. I., "I hope you will pay attention to what I have to say. You are aware that the Board of Education have recently issued a circular. Now, Master PARR, I must really request you to put away your snuff-box."

The Old Boy, thus brought into prominent

notice, hurriedly concealed the article specified.

"I must absolutely insist upon attention," continued the G. I. "How can you expect to teach others if you cannot yourselves be taught? To resume, the circular insists that School-masters and Mistresses who happen to be of urban upbringing, are 'to seize every opportunity of gaining closer insight into the special conditions and problems of rural life.' A most excellent suggestion, in my opinion. So to carry out the proposal of the Board, I will ask Master PARR to be so good as to climb that tree and bring down the bird's nest which he will find on one of its loftier branches."

"I am afraid I am scarcely equal to the task," said the unfortunate Old Boy. "I

have done nothing of the sort for nearly half a century."

"Let me attempt it," put in a School-master of forty-eight. "I have brought with me a folding ladder, which I fancy may be useful."

"I am not certain that that would be quite fair, 'BABY,'" returned the G. I., with a smile, giving his junior pupil a favourite nickname.

But "BABY," with the impulsiveness of comparative youth, had already commenced the ascent, and within three-quarters of an hour, had returned with the object of his quest.

"It was toughish work," he panted out upon reaching the ground, "and as you saw, my descent was more speedy than dignified."

"I hope you have not hurt yourself," returned the G. I., kindly. "I am quite sure the Board had no intention, when framing their instructions, that you should run into needless danger. The Board, using me as an instrument, have enabled you to 'gain full knowledge of the main principles and phenomena of rural life and activities.' Once more I quote from the circular."

By this time the sun was setting, and the G. I. thought it was time to dismiss the class with a few parting words.

"My good friends," he observed, "when next we meet it will be my duty to introduce you to the domestic economy of the beehive. I will ask one of you to deal with a swarm of honey-manufacturers. Then I think some of you might calm the ruffled temper of a furious bull. And so forth and so forth."

"I am afraid, Sir," put in Master PARR, "that I shall have to seriously reconsider the obligations attaching to my position before our next meeting."

"Do not be discouraged," replied the G. I., seeing that his backward pupil was voicing the intention of many of his colleagues. "I can assure you that had you lived in the country these little tasks would have been familiar to you. You will soon acquire the knack of their achievement."

"May I ask a question?" timidly murmured an Elderly Spinster.

"Certainly," was the response.

"I would ask, then, why do you think, Sir, that the Board of Education has selected us for this course of instruction?"

The G. I. was silent for several minutes while he considered the matter.

"Well," said he at last, "I would suggest that the Board of Education must have come to the conclusion that you have reached that advanced age known technically as second childhood."

And thoroughly satisfied with this solution to the problem that had puzzled them, the Old Boys and the Elderly Spinsters hurried back to Mudcomb on the Slooze to send in their resignations.





GOOD WISHES!

(Opening of the Paris Exhibition is announced for Saturday, April 14.)



Som  
you  
sati  
Sout  
as k  
thick  
had  
have  
Edin  
WI  
be s  
delig  
Parli  
shall  
expre  
in hi  
sugge  
that a  
"  
An  
Thu

## ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Monday, April 2.—A night wi' BURNS, or, to be more precise, wi' CALDWELL. Has for some time been comparatively mute; war in South Africa and Budget Bill, chief topics of recent weeks, not exactly out of his line. Nothing is that affords opportunity for speech-making. But there are varying points of attraction. These two are instinct wth public and private interest. What JAMES likes is something dour.

Last Session—or was it the year before?—Lord Advocate brought in a Bill amending the Scotch Local Government Acts.



"Sitting under" C-ldw-ll.

An excellent preparation for the holidays.

Something like a Bill, that was. None of your leaflets, things of one clause, that satisfy a weak-kneed, slim-backed Southerner. The Scotch Bill was about as long as the Crinan Canal; nearly as thick as Arthur's Seat is high. If you had taken it out leaf by leaf, it would have made a girdle lightly clasping Edinburgh town.

What a day JAMES did have with it, to be sure! Nay, what weeks of relentless delight. When the Bill, now an Act of Parliament, is casually mentioned, you shall see a sudden softening of his expressive countenance, a lingering look in his eye, a watering about the lips suggestive of reminiscence of banquets that are no more.

"O ships of mine whose swift keels clef  
The enchanted sea on which they sailed;  
Are these poor fragments only left  
Of vain desires, and hopes that failed?"

Thus JAMES, turning time after time to



"A little bit of Georgie Hamilton."

the Orders of the Day and finding nothing promising among the list of Bills. To-night the cloud lifted. Fortune came to him with glowing hands both filled. To begin with, there was the Ecclesiastical Assessments (Scotland) Bill. For three-quarters of an hour JAMES dallied with its enticing details. Next came the Lunacy Board (Scotland) Bill. In a speech of nearly an hour's length he moved its rejection. Item—the Army Annual Bill, fourth Order of Day; JAMES thoroughly thrashed it out in Committee, coming up smiling with a few observations offered on the third reading. The Palatine Court of Durham Bill suggested a fifth speech.

Midnight now approached, meanly envious of JAMES's predominance. JOKIM, encouraged by the circumstance that JAMES had talked the House into a state of coma in which it didn't care what happened, tried to run through the Naval Reserve Mobilization Bill. JAMES up like a shot. If he only talked till stroke of midnight, Bill must necessarily stand over. Could "do it on his 'ed," as the gentleman in



Running over the Points of the Railway Accidents Prevention Bill.

(The Right Hon. C. T. R-tch-e.)

the dock says, when sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour. His task accomplished, he sat down blushing in response to hearty burst of cheering that acknowledged his prowess.

"Don't mention it, Lord Advocate," said JAMES, when privately congratulated. "No trouble at all, I assure you. Indeed, I've had quite a pleasant evening."

Business done.—Mr. CALDWELL makes six speeches on five Bills.

Tuesday.—For a man of Scotch birth, and plain manner, one who has translated the old puppet play, Dr. Faustus, has contributed to classic literature a Handbook on Food and Drugs, HEDDERWICK a little flustered to-night. Has on



Hon. Alfr-d Lytt-lt-n has an innings.

the paper a resolution affirming desirability of direct representation of the Colonies in House of Commons; prepared luminous speech in support of his thesis. Question is, will House be sitting when his turn comes? Precedence taken by WEDDERBURN, who has a motion raising question of famine in India. SAM SMITH to second it. House, after all, a delicate organisation. Can stand only a certain amount of mental excitement. By the time SAM SMITH, following WEDDERBURN, makes an end of speaking, a little bit of GEORGIE HAMILTON will go a long way; thereafter will be disposition to get out of the whirl of things.

To put the case in another way, there was every prospect of early count-out. HEDDERWICK confirmed in this suspicion by brief conversation with the SAGE OF QUEEN ANNE'S GATE. Button-holing him, he said, "Now, what line do you mean to take on my motion?"

"Well," said the SAGE in softest ac-



cent, with blandest smile, "as soon as you get up I will make a straight-line for the door."

That not encouraging. Supposing others in a not very full muster follow same course there would be no quorum. But, like the gentleman in the song, in the House of Commons you never know where you are. True, as soon as HEDDERWICK rose and, taking an apposite text from his immortal work on Food and Drugs, skilfully turned it to the uses of argument in favour of direct Colonial Parliamentary representation, some one called SPEAKER's attention to undeniable fact that there weren't forty members present. Bell rang; at least a score trooped in; HEDDERWICK

*Quelles alouettes!* Friskiness not most prominent quality with Lord High Chancellor. This afternoon humour irresistibly mastered him. As SPEAKER of House of Lords his duty to call over Orders of the Day; see that various bills and motions set down thereon are duly dealt with. List this afternoon extended beyond first page; two bills all to themselves on second page.

Fancy the MARKISS must have been in the little plot. Just before it burst upon appalled House he crossed over, seated himself on Woolsack, and whispered something in Lord Chancellor's wig. SARK says he saw HALSBURY wink in return. That probably freak of disordered imagina-

after Colony was invaded. Went on to Rhodesia and so back to Westminster.

His talk worth hearing and his book worth reading by British and Irish friends of the gentle Boer. No question of his sincerity or impartiality. His plain unvarnished tale shows in clear light the cupidity and tyranny of Boer government, the patience, perseverance and foresight with which Mr. KRÜGER secretly prepared for war when he found it necessary, sooner or later, either to fight or to grant good government.

A pathetic chapter in the little book is that which describes the peace, plenty and contentment of the Free Staters before the Spider of Pretoria dragged



"RUNNING DOWN" FOR THE EASTER HOLIDAYS.

(The Ministerial Marionettes refuse to work any longer.)

was safe, and his speech may be read in *Hansard*.

*Business done.*—Private members had a turn.

*Wednesday.*—Many Happy Returns of her Birthday to Mrs. ANN HORNIMAN, of Coombecliffe, Croydon, mother of the member for Penrhyn, grandmother of that sturdy young man's eight month old daughter. Mrs. HORNIMAN has just scored 101 and not out.

Some people with healthy minds and sound bodies are very hard to bowl. Member for Sark says it's all due to a diet of Pure Tea obtainable in Packets only.

*Business done.*—Irish Bill on, which brought up Irish Attorney-General with one of his delightful speeches. Pity they should be confined to Wednesday afternoons when audience is scanty and dull. ATKINSON is the best speaker, the wittiest man, Irish Bar has contributed to Westminster since days of DOWSE. PRINCE ARTHUR should find him more fitting opportunity than has hitherto fallen to his hand.

*House of Lords, Thursday.*—Such larks!

tion, concurrent with conception of the MARKISS and Lord High Chancellor getting up little surprise for House. However it be, as soon as MARKISS returned to Ministerial Bench Lord Chancellor, looking down first page of Orders, seeing it was completed, on nod from MARKISS, declared the adjournment, unmindful of the two bills over leaf.

In vain noble Lords in charge of them pleaded their right. When on board a well-regulated ship, report is made to Captain that it is twelve o'clock, he responds, "Make it so." Lord Chancellor had said House was adjourned. Nothing to be done but to make it so.

*Business done.*—Railway Accidents Bill read second time in Commons.

*House of Commons, Friday.*—EVELYN CECIL back from South Africa full of what he heard and saw "On the Eve of the War." MURRAY publishes his impressions in a little volume adorned by some charming sketches made by Mrs. CECIL, and photographs snapped on the spot by the member for East Herts. CECIL was at Ladysmith on the day of the declaration of war; remained in Natal three weeks

into his web the fine fat fly of Bloemfontein.

*Business done.*—Lord High Chancellor assures House of Lords that story about his fixing up a joke with the MARKISS yesterday "an absurd statement." Never made a joke in his life.

#### TO DELAGOA.

(A Berne-ing Question.)

AH, railway HELEN! promised ground  
Filched from our husbandry of freight!  
Abduction has an ugly sound,  
Better their plan who arbitrate.  
Why art thou wasted? Hast thou found  
Avoirdupois gone out of date?  
And if twelve ounces make a pound  
After ten years, is this Troy weight?

#### A DEFINITION OF PAYMENT.

Janet. What's the meaning of paying in kind, TOM?

Tom. Well, supposing that I owed you half a sovereign and gave you a kiss instead, that would be paying in kind.

Janet. I'd rather have the half sovereign. [But she didn't get it.]



(Continued from p. 252.)

“Y

OU'RE a ready-money gentleman, like me. Seen it in your eye

the minute you come into my shop,” said Mr. MUGGRIDGE.

“Twenty guineas and my book, on the *Insect Pests of Household Pets*, thrown in.”

I rallied myself here; in the last ditch, so to speak, I made my effort, and while the horrible boy was converting a four-wheeler into a menagerie of screaming, snapping curiosities, I explained to MUGGRIDGE that I only had five pounds upon me. He put out his hand and said something about a cheque for the balance, but, seeing my advantage, I declared that I had ordered nothing beyond the four guinea-pigs, needed nothing else, and should pay for nothing else.

Then he asserted that I might have the lot for ten pounds, as it was a pity to take them out of the cab again.

Still I refused, and he tried to get sentiment into the argument.

He said:

“It’s a reg’lar ‘appy fam’ly. I should most call it cruelty to animals to separate them things again.”

Still I was firm, and he became desperate. He said:

“Gimme the fiver then and clear out. It’s robbery—that’s what it is, an’ I’m sure the beasts won’t do you no good. But gimme the money an’ I’ll fling in a tortoise, to show there’s no ill-feeling, if you’ll go at once.”

I said:

“Listen to me. I do not want your tortoise. I’m a married man with two grown-up daughters. We all detest animals of every sort—especially tortoises. I shall send your guinea-pigs to a children’s hospital, where they may or may not be welcomed. For the rest of these creatures, I have no earthly use, and I refuse to take them.”

“That’s not good enough for me,” declared Mr. MUGGRIDGE. “I’ve wasted a whole morning upon you,”—I’d been in the shop a bare quarter of an hour—“and time is money, if birds and animals ain’t. Besides, you hordered ‘em.”

He advanced threateningly, and I stepped forward with no less indignation; but as I did so, my arm knocked over a cage containing two long, black, red-beaked birds, which turned out to be Cornish choughs. These now uttered wild, west-country exclamations, flapped and fluttered and screamed, knocked over other cages in their downfall, and angered a badger or some kindred beast that dwelt in a box covered with corrugated iron wire.

Then, while I gathered myself from the ruins, ill-luck cast me against a bowl of gold-fish, a sea-water aquarium, the guinea-pigs, and a consignment of large green lizards that suddenly appeared without visible reason in the full possession of their liberty. These things fell in an avalanche, and MUGGRIDGE’s shop instantly resembled the dark scene that preludes a pantomime. It is not strange, therefore, when you consider what I had already been through, that I was among the first of the intelligent animals present to lose my nerve and my temper.

Frankly, I aimed a blow at MUGGRIDGE in an un-Christian spirit; but missed him and fetched down a green parrot.

Suspecting the emporium to be on fire, chance passers-by—always ready to thrust themselves into the misfortunes of other people—now rushed amongst us. A policeman entered also, and Mr. MUGGRIDGE, evidently disappointed to find his plans thus shattered and his scheme foiled, endeavoured to give me in charge. I explained the true position, however, or attempted to do so; but my self-respect deserted me; I raised my voice as MUGGRIDGE raised his; I even used language that will always be a sorrow to me in moments of retrospection. We raved each at the other and danced round the policeman, while gold-fish flapped about our feet and green lizards tried to ascend our trouser-legs. The constable himself turned round and round, licking a pencil and trying to make notes in a little book. Presently I think he began to grow giddy and faint-hearted. At any rate he realised the futility of working up an effective case. He shut his book, showed anger, and took certain definite measures.

First he swept a few promiscuous spectators out of the shop; then he thrust the infuriated MUGGRIDGE back behind his counter and finally turned to me.

“I’ll have no more of this tommy-rot, or the pair of you’ll have to come along to the station,” he said. “As for you,

MUGGRIDGE, it's your old game, plantin' your rubbishy, stinkin' varmint on unoffendin' characters before they can open their mouths—I'm up to your hanky-panky; and you"—now he addressed me—"if you're not old enough to know better than come buyin' these 'ere mangy hanimals, an' loadin' a cab with 'em, just because this man asks you to, you ought to be shut up. If you take my tip, you 'll go and 'ang yourself—that's about the best thing you can do. Anyway, you must clear out of this 'ere."

I was deeply agitated, hysterical, not master of my words or actions; I had reached a physical and mental condition upon which the policeman's words fell as a fitting climax.

"Thank you!" I said; "I've had some unequal advice today—good, bad, indifferent. But there's no doubt that yours is the best, the soundest, the most suited to my case that I'm likely to get anywhere. I will go and hang myself. Nothing shall become my life like the leaving of it. Shake hands, constable; you, at least, have counselled well."

I pressed his palm and was gone. I forgot wife, children, business, honour, and heaven in that awful moment. I, a member of the Committee of the Stock Exchange, passed through the streets of London like a mere escaped lunatic. My shattered, lacerated nerve-centres cried for peace and oblivion; I longed to be dead and out of it all. My self-respect was already dead, and what is life without that? I thought of the future after this nightmare-day, and felt that there could be no future for me. So I vanished into the fog—a palpitating pariah with one frantic, overmastering resolution—to hang myself, and that at once.

## II.

BUT a man cannot forget the training of his youth, the practice of his adult years, and the support of his middle age, in one demonian hour. As I passed wildly through dim, bilious abysses of filth-laden atmosphere, though my body was soon lost, and hopelessly lost, in the fog, my mind became a trifle clearer, and steadfast principles of a lifetime reasserted themselves. I determined to go on with my shattered existence; indeed, I felt tolerably sure that my fellow-man, who had kept me thus busily employed, would presently prevent me from carrying my purpose to its bitter end. I grew a little calmer, recollected the terms of my wager, and so proceeded with the directions delivered by the police constable, doubting nothing but that my next meeting with a human being would divert the catastrophe, and once more set me forward upon a new road.

Presently a little shop loomed alongside me, and I perceived that here might be procured an essential in the matter of destruction by hanging. A mean and humble establishment it was, lighted by one paraffin lamp. The stock-in-trade apparently consisted of ropes and door-pegs—in fact, the complete equipment proper to my undertaking. Time and place agreed; it was, indeed, just such a gloomy, lonesome, and sequestered hole as a suicide might select to make his final purchases. From a door behind the counter there came to me a bald and mournful little man with weak eyes, a subdued manner, and the facial inanity of the rabbit. Hints of a fish dinner followed him from his dwelling-room, and through the door I could catch a glimpse of his family, four in number, partaking of that meal.

"What might you want?" he asked, but in a despondent tone, implying, to my ear, that it was rarely his good fortune to have anything in stock a would-be customer desired to purchase.

"I want a rope to hang a man," I answered, and waited with some interest to see the result.

The small shopkeeper's eyes grew round, a mixture of admiration and creeping fear lighted them.

"My gracious! You're him, then! To think as ever I should—"

Here he broke off, and, in a frenzy of excitement, opened the door behind him and spoke to his wife. I overheard, though not intended to do so, but he could not subdue his voice. I think he felt confronted by the supreme event of his life.

"JANE, JANE! Creep in the shop quiet and look at this here man! By 'Eaven! it's the public executioner! To think as ever I should sell a rope to him! Hush!"

He turned and while he addressed me with dreadful humility, the woman, JANE, crept into the shop and stared morbidly upon my harrowed countenance.

Then she whispered to her husband:

"That's not him, for I seed his picture in the *Police News* last week. It's a new one, or else his assistant!"

Meantime I was being served, and it seemed that the little man suddenly awakened to the dignity of his calling before my sensational order. He began handling a wilderness of rope ends and discoursing upon them with the air of an expert as he rose to this great occasion.

"A nice twisted cordage you'll be wanting, and if you'll leave the choice to me, nobody shall be none the worse. I've been in rope since I was seventeen. Now Manila hemp won't do—too stiff and woody, too lacking in suppleness. That's what you want: suppleness. The sisal hems, from South America, are very pretty things, and the New Zealand hemp is hard to beat; but there's another still more beautiful cordage. Only it's very rarely used because it comes rather expensive. Still, when a fellow-creature's life's at stake, I suppose you won't count the cost. Besides, the Government pays, don't it? That's a Jubbulpore hemp—best of all—or bowstring hemp, as I'm told they use in the harems of the East, though what for I couldn't say. I've got a very nice piece—ten foot long and supple as silk. Just try it; and any strain up to two hundred pound. Hand-spun, of course—a lovely thing, though I say so. But it's a terrible thought. Jute's cheaper, only I won't guarantee it; I won't, indeed. You want a reliable article, if only for your own reputation, and one more thing: I suppose there's no objection to my using this as an advertisement? People in these parts is all so fond of horrors; and as it's Government I ought to be allowed the lion and unicorn perhaps?"

I bought the Jubbulpore hemp as the man advised. It cost thirty shillings, and the vendor wrestled between pleasure at the success of his extortion and horror at the future. But I told him he must neither advertise the circumstance, nor dare to assume the lion and unicorn on the strength of it. This discouraged him, and he lost heart and took a gloomy view of the matter.

"A awful tride, if I may say so without offence," he ventured. "Would it be the Peckham Rye murderer as you're buying this rope for, or that poor soul who lost his temper with his wife's mother down Forest Hill wye?"

"Neither," I answered. "It is a man called HONEYBUN."

"HONEYBUN! Ah! A ugly, crool nime! What's he done?"

"Made a fool of himself."

"Lord! If we was hung for that, there wouldn't be much more talk of over-population—eh? Well, well, I s'pose he'll be as 'appy with you and that bit of Jubbulpore as we can hope for him. A iron nerve it must want. Yet Mr. KIRCH was quite the Christian at 'ome, I b'lieve. Not your first case, of course?"

I picked up the rope and prepared to depart.

"My very first experience," I said.

"Pore soul!" exclaimed the feeling tradesman, but he referred to the criminal, not to me.

"For Gord's sake don't bungle it!" were the last husky words I heard from him; and then I set forth to hang ARTHUR HONEYBUN, who deserved hanging if ever a man did. I told myself this, and made a quotation which I forget.

And now arose one of the most sinister concatenations easily to be conceived in the life of a respectable citizen. Here was I



on the brink of self-destruction; I only waited for some fellow-creature to restrain me. But nobody attempted to do so! My folly in disguising the truth from the little rope-merchant now appeared. Had he known, he had doubtless shown me my dreadful error in time; now it was too late, for the world pursued its own business wholly regardless of me and my black-garret and my hidden rope. Apparently there was really nothing for me to do but to lose my wager or hang myself—an alternative which I well knew would represent for my family a total pecuniary loss considerably greater than the sum involved.

I wandered down a lonely court and found an archway at the bottom. One sickly gas lamp gleamed above this spot, and the silence of death reigned within it. Had I been in sober earnest, no nook hidden away under the huge pall of the fog could have suited me better. Some evil fiend had apparently taken charge of my volition and designed to see the matter through, for I pursued this business of hanging with a callous deliberation that amazed me. I even smiled as I climbed up the arch and made the rope fast upon the lamp above it. Not a soul came to interrupt. The lamp blinked lazily; the fog crowded closer to see the sight; the fiend busied himself with my Jubbulpore rope, and arranged all preliminaries, while I sat and grinned over the sooty desolation. I felt my pulse calmly, critically; I indulged in mental analysis; endeavoured to estimate my frame of mind; and wondered if I could throw the experience into literary form for a scientific journal. I remember being particularly surprised that the attitude of my intellect towards this performance was untinctured by any religious feeling whatsoever.

Then came a psychological moment when the fiend had done everything that he possibly could for me. My task was merely to tie the loose end of the Jubbulpore masterpiece round my neck and cast forth into the void. How strange a thing is memory! For some extraordinary reason Dr. JOHNSON'S definition of flashing flashed into my mind. I could not recall it exactly at that terrible moment, but I remembered how it had to do with a fool at one end of a piece of string.

Still not a footstep—only the rumble and roar of all selfish London some twenty yards off—never a hand to save me from a coward's doom. I grew much annoyed with London; I reminded London of the chief incidents in my own career; I asked myself if this was justice; I also asked myself why I had been weak enough to turn into a blind alley—evidently an unpopular, undesirable spot, habitually ignored. And then I grew melancholy, even maudlin. I saw my faults staring at me—my negligences and ignorances; and chiefly my crass idiocy in not undertaking this matter at Piccadilly Circus, or some main junction of our metropolitan system where such enterprises are not tolerated. It is, of course, a free country, and the rights of the subject are fairly sacred, speaking generally; but we draw the line here and there, and I knew that any attempt to annihilate myself upon some lamp-post amid the busy hum of men must have resulted as I desired. Interference would have prevented complete suspension there; but here the seclusion was absolute, and simply invited crime. The fog had now reached its crowning triumph, and threatened to deprive my trusty Jubbulpore hemp of its prey, for I was suffocating, and asphyxia threatened to overwhelm me at any moment.

"Where the deuce are the police?" I asked myself at this eleventh hour. It was a policeman who had placed me in my present pitiable fix, and—blessed inspiration! why should not another of the tribe extricate me from it? When in danger or imminent peril it is our custom to shout for the help of the law, and surely if ever a poor, overwrought soul stood in personal need of the State's assistance, it was ARTHUR HONEYBUN at that moment. So, with nerves strung to concert pitch, I lifted up my voice, and called for a policeman. In these cases, however, one does not specify or limit, so my summons was couched generally to the force at large.

There followed no immediate response; then three boys assembled under my arch, and they formed a nucleus or focus about which a small crowd of the roughest possible persons, male and female, collected. Last of all a policeman came also.

"Now then!" he said, "what's all this, then?"

The miserable boys took entire credit to themselves for discovering me perched aloft. They pointed me out and called attention to the Jubbulpore rope dangling from the lamp, and elaborated their own theories.

Very properly the constable paid no attention to them, but addressed all his remarks to me.

"You up there," he asked, "what d'you think you're plyin' at?"

There was no sympathy in his voice. He appeared to be a tall, harsh officer—a mere machine, with none of the milk of human kindness in him. Or perhaps a beat in Seven Dials had long since turned it sour. Moreover, he felt that the crowd was on his side—a circumstance that always renders a constable over-confident and aggressive.

I felt unstrung, as I say—distracted, and more or less hysterical, or I should have approached the situation differently; but I was not my own master; I sat there, a mere parcel of throbbing nerves escaped from a hideous death. So, instead of being lucid, which is a vital necessity in all communion with the police, I uttered obscure sayings, went out of my way to be cryptical and even spoke in spasmodic parables, but of course there exists no member of the body politic upon whom a parable is wasted more utterly than your constable.

"You are surprised, and naturally so, to see me here," I said.

"There are, however, more things in heaven and earth, policeman, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. I am the creature of circumstances—in fact, of a series of circumstances probably unparalleled. A colleague of your own—it may be a personal friend—is responsible for my position on this arch. Yonder wretched boy has not erred; I had seriously thought to destroy myself. I was driven to the very threshold of that rash act. *A fronte præcipitium, a tergo lupi*, policeman. I am here perched between the devil and the deep sea—a precipice in front, a pack of wolves in the immediate rear. Now, be frank with me. I place myself entirely in your hands. I desire your honest and dispassionate advice."

But this is not the way to talk to a policeman; perhaps it is not the way to talk to anybody.

The deplorable boy had another theory.

He said:

"The blighter's off his onion!"

Then somebody else, dimly conscious that I had used a foreign language, suspected that I might be an anarchist. The policeman merely told me to come down, and I obeyed without hesitation, and gave myself up to him. I felt that situated thus, at least I was safe enough, if he would only do his duty; but he appeared to believe in the opinion that I was a foreigner.

"Where d'you come from?" he asked; "if you're not English, it's a case for your bloomin' Consul."

"I come from South Kensington," I answered, "and I am English to the backbone, and it's your duty to convey me to the police-station, which I'll thank you to do."

Here again I made a mistake. No man likes being told his duty—whether owing to a natural aversion from thinking of it or doing it, or for other reasons connected with pride I know not; but the constable, upon this speech of mine, displayed annoyance, and even some idea of leaving me to my own devices. Seeing that he showed an inclination to let me escape into the fog without a word of advice, and desiring no such thing, I spurred him to his office. I said:

"If you do not arrest me, I shall persuade some other member of the force to do so, and, as I have already made a note of your number, it will be the worse for you."

Upon this he started as if a serpent had stung him; the crowd

cheered me, and my object was attained. He felt his popularity was slipping away and so set about regaining it.

"All right, all right, my bold 'ero!" he said. Then he blew a whistle and summoned two colleagues.

"Dangerous lunatic—wants to be took up," he explained. "Clean off his chump. Tryin' to 'ang 'imself."

Then he turned to me, and adopted a conciliatory tone.

"Now, then, uncle, come along quiet," he said.

I suggested a cab, and offered to pay for it, but the constable held such a thing unnecessary extravagance.

"Won't hurt you to walk," he said. "And we'll go quicker than a four-wheeler in this fog."

So, with a large accompaniment of those who win entertainment from the misfortunes of their betters, I started to some sheltering haven where it was my hope that the remainder of the day might be spent in security and seclusion, behind bolts and bars. In this desire lurked no taste of shame or humiliation. I was far past anything of that kind. My sole desire, my unuttered prayer, was to be saved from all further human counsel whatsoever. If an angel from heaven had fluttered down beside me and uttered celestial opinions to brighten that dark hour, I should have rejected his advice—very likely with rudeness.

I thought of the cynical sagacity of NORTON BELLAMY. How wise he had been! And what a fool was I. I pictured his face when my story came to be told. I heard his horrid laughter, and my self-respect oozed away, and I almost wished I was back with the Jubbulpore hemp upon the arch.

Then in the moment of my self-abasement, at the supreme climax of my downfall, I looked out through a yellow rift in the accursed fog, and saw NORTON BELLAMY himself!

At first indeed I did not credit this. The fog had lifted somewhat; livid patches and streaks of daylight relieved the gloom, and a dingy metropolis peeped and blinked through it, fungus-coloured and foul; but suddenly, painted upon the murky air, there took shape and substance a moving concourse of figures—of heads under helmets—and I, remembering the spectre of the Brocken, for a moment suspected that what I saw was but the shadow of myself, my policeman and my crowd projected over against us upon the dusky atmosphere.

Yet as that other company approached, the splendid truth burst upon me. Vagrants, policemen and rioting boys mainly composed it, but in the place of chief dishonour walked NORTON BELLAMY! He too, it would seem, had violated the laws of this country; he too, by devious and probably painful ways, had drifted into Seven Dials and there lost his freedom; an even-handed Nemesis, whose operations yet remained hidden from me, had clearly punished BELLAMY for rejecting the advice of his fellowman, even as she had chastened me for accepting it. And from cursory appearances it looked as though BELLAMY had endured even more varied torments than my own. One might have thought that attempts had been made to clean the highway with him. He was dripping with mud; he lacked a hat; his white waistcoat awoke even a passing pity in my heart. And yet the large placidity, the awful calm of a fallen spirit sat on BELLAMY. He had doubtless exploded, detonated, boiled over, fumed, foamed, fretted and thundered to his utmost limit. His bolt was shot; his venom was gone; he stood before me reduced to the potency of a mere empty cartridge case.

We met each other's glance simultaneously, and a sort of savage and foggy beam of joy flitted across his muddy face; while for my part I doubt not that some passing expression of pleasure, which tact and humanity instantly extinguished, also illuminated my features. Our retinues mingled and for a moment we had speech together.

Needless to say the discovery that we were friends proved a source of much gratification to the crowd.

"Great Scott! You!" gasped out BELLAMY. "What have you done?"

"Practically nothing," I answered; "but what I have suffered no tongue can tell and no human being will ever know. It is sufficient to say that I am here because I was deliberately advised by a fellow-creature to go and hang myself."

"They told you to do that?" he asked with keen but suppressed excitement.

"They did."

He was silent for an instant, pondering this thing, while joy and sorrow mingled on his muddy countenance. Then he answered me.

"I'll write your cheque the first moment I get back to the office. You were right. There is more good advice given than bad. I've proved it too. If I'd done half what I was told to-day, I——"

Here our respective guardians separated us, and we marched to our destination in silence; but about five or six minutes later we sat side by side in a police-station and were permitted to renew our conversation.

"You've had a stirring day, no doubt," BELLAMY began, while he scraped mud off himself. "Tell me your yarn, then I'll tell you mine. But how is it, if somebody advised you to go and hang yourself, that you are here now? You'll have to explain that first as a matter of honour."

I explained, and it must be confessed that my words sounded weak. It is certain, at any rate, that they did not convince BELLAMY.

"I withdraw the promise to write a cheque," he said shortly. "On your own showing you dallied and dawdled and fooled about upon the top of that arch. You temporized. If you had followed that advice with promptitude and like a man, you wouldn't be here now. This is paltry and dishonest. I certainly sha'n't pay you a farthing."

I told him that I felt no desire to take his money, and he was going into the question of how far he might be said to have won mine, when we were summoned before the Magistrate. Here Fate at last befriended me, for the Justice proved to be Master of my Lodge of Freemasons and an old personal friend. Finding that no high crime was laid at the door of BELLAMY, and, very properly, refusing to believe that I had been arrested in an attempt on my own life, he rebuked my policeman and restored to us our liberty. Whereupon we departed in a hansom cab, after putting two guineas apiece into the poor-box. This I need hardly say was my idea.

Then, as we drove to a hatter's at the wish of NORTON BELLAMY, he threw some light on the sort of morning he himself had spent. The man was reserved and laconic to a ridiculous degree under the circumstances, therefore I shall never know all that he endured; but I gathered enough to guess at the rest and feel more resigned in the contemplation of my own experiences. He hated to utter his confession, yet the experiences of that day rankled so deep within him that he had not the heart to make light of them.

"A foretaste of the hereafter," began BELLAMY; "that's what my day has been; and if such a fiendish morning isn't enough to drive a man to good works and a better way of life, I'd like to see what is. You say your trouble began in the railway carriage coming to town. So did mine. But whereas your part was passive, and, by the mere putty-like and plastic virtue of ready obedience to everybody you finally found yourself face to face with death, I reached the same position through a more active and terrible sort of way."

"Nevertheless," said I, "taking into consideration the difference between my character and yours—remembering that by nature you are aggressive, I retiring—nothing you can say will make me believe that you have suffered more than I. Physically perhaps, but not mentally."

(Continued in our next.)

\*\* COPYRIGHT IN THE U.S. OF AMERICA, 1900,  
BY EDEN PHILLIPOTS.